Miscellanea.

Metropolitan Improvements. — The site of the contemplated Thames embankment on the Middlesex side of the river is undergoing a minute survey, and when carried into effect will be one of the greatest ornaments of the metropolis. A line of quays, similar to those on the banks of the Seine in Paris, is proposed to be carried from Whitehall to Blackfriars-bridge upon arches, so as not to interfere with the navigation of the river, and the numerous coal-barges approaching the wharves. At Pimlico the houses are now nearly all pulled down, and workmen are busily engaged in razing them for the new road, which will join the Vauxhall-road, and materially widen the vicinity of Buckingham-palace. The "rookery" which has existed for so many centuries in Westminster, Tothill-street, York-street, and Castle-lane, is all to come down to make way for the improvements. The widening of Piccadilly, by taking in a small portion of the Green-park, will commence this month. The new street leading from Coventry-street across Leicester-square to Long-acre is in an advanced state, as all the old buildings are pulled down, and workmen are laying the foundations of the new houses. The new street from Waterloo-bridge, across High-street, Bloomsbury, to Tottenham-court-road, is proceeding rapidly, and several hundred houses have been pulled down in the neighbourhood of St. Giles's.

Extensive Improvements at Eton College.—Eton, March 26.—At a recent meeting of old Etonians it was agreed that extensive alterations and additional buildings should be made in Eton College, for the accommodation of the scholars on the foundation, at the estimated cost of 23,000*l*. It was proposed to erect the new building on the site of the coach-houses and stables of the Provost and Fellows, to alter and improve the present long chamber, to form proper sewers, and provide an apparatus for warming with hot water the apartments in which the scholars will be lodged. It is also intended to form on the ground-floor of the new buildings, which from local circumstances cannot be applied to the accommodation of the scholars, one large room for the reception of the library of the school, to which his late Majesty George IV. was a liberal contributor, which room may be used as an examination room for the Newcastle Scholarship, and for the prizes given by his Royal Highness Prince Albert for proficiency in modern languages, and also rooms in which the different masters for modern languages and mathematics may receive their pupils. There will also be two rooms appropriated in the tower for the use of the upper boys in the evening. Estimates from 15 competitors were sent in to Mr. Shaw, the architect, by whom they were opened at Christ's Hospital on Monday last, and afterwards forwarded to Eton, and at a special meeting held at the College on the same day it was settled that Mr. Burton's tender should be accepted. These important and extensive works will be commenced forthwith, under the superintendence of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Harrison, the architect and surveyor of the college.

Tyndall's Park.—We understand that the whole of Tyndall's park, and the adjacent field, is to be let for building: if the plans are carried out, the contemplated buildings will form one of the most ornamental parts of the city. They are laid out in squares, terraces, &c., and reflect great credit upon the taste of Mr. Dyer, the architect, to whom the disposal of the ground has been confided. A number of workmen have for some time past been employed in the construction of the sewers and drainage. It cannot but excite regret that this beautiful spot, so much resorted to for healthful recreation, is to be covered with houses, though it is only to be wondered at that such appropriation, so much more profitable than grazing-land, has not been before carried out, as was intended some twenty years ago. There cannot be a doubt that the land will fetch a high price.—*Bristol Journal.*

Submarine Plough.—A submarine plough for removing sand-banks in shallow waters is said to have been constructed by Dr. Eddy, of Cincinnati, somewhat on the principle of the Archimedean screw, having a wind at one end, and passing it through the screw to be discharged at the other extremity.

Smoke.—In the voluminous report on smoke, lately made in the House of Commons, by a select committee, some curious facts are mentioned; for example, Mr. Chandler, camellia-grower at Wandsworth, states that on account of the great increase of chimneys from manufactories in that vicinity, plants which formerly might be handled without any bad effect, now soil the hands to the greatest extent. Among other plants which formerly flourished, but will not now grow in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, are China roses, rhododendron hirsutum, rhododendron virginium, and many others of the prettiest varieties, now quite extinct. Mr. Anderson, the curator of the Physic Gardens at Chelsea, testifies to the noxious effects of what he calls the "bitter smoke" upon the trees of that establishment, particularly on evergreens, and on two magnificent cedars which have so long been an ornament to the gardens, and form a very conspicuous object from the river. It appears that the sooty particles are attracted to and attached by the resinous exudations of the leaves, while the large surface of the foliage above prevents their being washed away by the rains, so that the functional action of the leaves is disturbed, if not entirely destroyed.

Death of Thorwaldsen, the Eminent Sculptor. — Copenhagen, March 25th.—Albert Thorwaldsen, the greatest artist of the day, is no more. Yesterday evening he went, as was his custom, to the theatre. Before the commencement of the performance he suddenly fell back in his seat, and he was carried out, and soon after breathed his last. He was born on the 19th of November, 1770, and was consequently in his 74th year. To the last day of his life he preserved his activity and cheerfulness of spirits, and he was engaged on some important works, among which may be mentioned the colossal statue of Hercules for the Palace of Christianburgh. On Saturday, the 30th of March, the mortal remains of the great master were interred in the Holm church. All he died possessed of he has bequeathed to the Thorwaldsen Museum; but, with the exception of his works of art, his property is not so great as was imagined. He had been working on the bust of Luther upon the day of his death.

Public Expenditure.—The Royal Palaces and Houses of Parliament.—On Saturday week was issued the estimate of money required for public works and buildings, for the year ending the 31st March, 1845. For public buildings and royal palaces the sum required is 112,190*l.*; for the temporary Houses of Parliament, 5,420*l.*; for the new Houses of Parliament (beyond the sum voted), 60,000*l.*; for Trafalgar-square, 7,000*l.*; for Holyhead roads, &c., 4,169*l.*; for the Caledonian canal, 50,000*l.*; for public buildings in Ireland, 26,871*l.*; and for Kingston harbour, 8,000*l.*; making, in the aggregate, 273,645*l.* The actual decrease, compared with 1843, is stated to be 42,626*l.* Among the items for services executed in 1843-4, and not provided for, is one of 1,500*l.* for the Queen's Prison, for furniture of some offices, and for furniture and bedding for the poor prisoners.

The Royal Academy of Fine Arts at Munich is about, for the first time in the last six years, to have an exhibition, commencing on the 25th of August; for which government has placed at its disposal the new palace just completed in front of the Glyptothek. The works of foreigners are to be received on the same terms as those of the national artists; and the academy has undertaken to invite individually the leading artists of all countries to contribute their works, undertaking to pay all expenses of transmission and return.—*Athenæum.*

Physicians' Hall. — We observe that within the last few days workmen have been busily engaged in the demolition of the Physicians' Hall, George-street, preparatory to the erection of the splendid edifice which is intended to be raised on its site for the office of the Commercial Bank. We understand that a new hall for the Royal College of Physicians is to be built in the centre of the eastern division of Queen-street.—*Edinburgh Observer.*

The foundation-stone of the New Assembly-house, Ruperra-street, Newport, was laid on the 26th ult.

Death of a Celebrated German Artist.—The *Journal des Débats* announces the death, at Munich, on the 18th ult., of M. Jean Baptiste Stiglmayer, director of the Royal Foundery of Munich, in the 52nd year of his age. "This distinguished engraver, painter, and sculptor carried the art of casting metals to the highest point it had ever reached in Germany. The monuments of colossal grandeur for which the Germans are indebted to him amount in number to 193, amongst which figure in the first rank the equestrian statues of Maximilian I. of Bavaria, and the Electors, his predecessors, which have been all gilt; the obelisk erected at Munich, in commemoration of 30,000 Bavarians killed in Russia. ["The inscription on this monument goes further," says our Paris letter, "for it states that the men whose deaths it commemorates 'fell in defence of their native land (*vaderland*)!' At Guntzburg (and I suppose they are to be found in nearly all the other towns of Bavaria) the churches contain tablets to the memory of the Bavarian soldiers who fell in the battles against the French, which preceded the capture of Paris in 1814?"]; the statues of Schiller, Jean Richter, Mozart, Beethoven, Bolivar (for Bolivia), and last, the statue of Goethe, who was the intimate friend of Stiglmayer, and at the execution of which the latter, although ill, worked with so much ardour, that two hours after the cast was terminated, and even before the mould was broken, he expired in the arms of his assistants. Some months previously, M. Stiglmayer, although he then enjoyed excellent health, had a sudden presentiment of his approaching death. From that moment he occupied himself night and day in preparing instructions for the execution in bronze of the statue of Bavaria, of which the celebrated sculptor, Schwanthaler, is now composing the model, a monument which is to be sixty-eight feet high, and which, after the famous Colossus of Rhodes, will be the largest piece of sculpture which ever existed. Fortunately, the instructions given by M. Stiglmayer have been committed to writing. They are most complete, and will be of the utmost utility to the artist to whom shall be intrusted the most gigantic operation of casting in bronze this immense monument."—*Times.*

Discoveries in Egypt.—I learned from Selim Pacha, the governor of Upper Egypt, who received us in a most friendly way at Siut, that, a few months before quarries of alabaster had been discovered a short distance off in the direction of the eastern mountains, the excavation of which had been committed to him by Mohammed Ali; and I heard from his dragoman, that there was an inscription to be found on them. I accordingly set off, on a hot ride, to the place appointed, the next morning, and found there a little colony, in all thirty-one people, in the solitary, desert burning cave. Behind the tent of the overseer, I discovered the remains of an inscription, recently much longer, but still containing the name and title of the wife, so much honoured by the Egyptians, of the first Amasis, the founder of the eighteenth dynasty which drove out the Hyksos, engraved in clear, sharply cut hieroglyphics. These are the first alabaster quarries whose age can be proved by an inscription: upwards of 300 blocks, the largest eight feet long, two thick, have been cut out during the last four months. The Pacha informed me, by his dragoman, that I might have, on my return, a slab of the best quality, of whatever size I chose to fix on, as a testimony of his joy at our visit. The quarries as yet found lie all between Bersch and Gaualá; one would, therefore, feel inclined to think El Boara the old Alabastron, if one could reconcile with it the passage in Ptolemy; at any rate, Alabastron can have nothing to do with the ruins in the valley of El Amarna, with which the description in Ptolemy as little agrees.—*Correspondent of the Athenæum.*

Brickmaking.—The newly-patented brick-machine, invented by Mr. W. Hodson, of this town, for making and compressing (when in a wet state) bricks of every description for building purposes, is of very simple construction, and produces a compressed stock brick with [illegible] number of [illegible] is employed when making the common stock brick. The machine is worked by hand-labour, and not susceptible of derangement.—*Hull Packet.*